1. A sigmoidoscope comprising:

at least one reusable part;

at least one disposable speculum having an observation end, an insertion end, and manually operable insufflation means, the speculum being adapted for insertion into a bowel cavity of a patient, and the insufflation means being adapted to insufflate the bowel cavity through the speculum with an insufflation medium thereby susceptible to contamination from within the bowel cavity; and

contamination prevention means insulating the at least one reusable part from being exposed to any contaminated insufflation medium during the examination.

2. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 1, wherein:

the insufflation means are reusable; and

the contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from being carried by the insufflation medium to the insufflation means.

3. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein:

the insufflation means are reusable; and

the contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from being carried by the insufflation medium to the patient being examined.

4. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a non-return valve interposed between the insufflation means and the speculum.

5. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 1 or 2 wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a filter.

6. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 1 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a precipitator.

7. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 1 or 2 wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a tortuous passageway.

8. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a combination of two or more members selected from the group consisting of non-return valves, filters, precipitators and tortuous passageways.

9. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1 or 2, wherein:
the insufflation means comprise a resiliently compressible squeeze bulb; and
the insufflation medium is air.

10. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 1, wherein the insufflation means are connected with the speculum and are disposable.

11. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 1, further comprising:
coupling means for optically coupling a reusable light source with the sigmoidoscope;
a disposable observation window at or adjacent to the observation end of the speculum, the observation window operative to guide light from the light source through the insertion end of the speculum; and
wherein the contamination prevention means further prevent contamination of the light source by the insufflation medium.

12. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 11 wherein the observation window is integral with the speculum.

13. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 11 or 12 wherein the observation window is selectively openable.

14. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 11 or 12, wherein the observation window is hingedly attached to the speculum.

15. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11 or 12, wherein the insufflation means communicate with an interior region of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with the speculum.

16. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11 or 12 wherein the insufflation means communicate with an interior region of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with an eyepiece.

17. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 16, wherein the eyepiece is disposable.

18. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11 or 12, wherein the contamination prevention means are disposable.

19. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11 or 12, wherein the contamination prevention means are effectively integral with the speculum.

20. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11 or 12, further comprising:

an inlet port for operatively connecting the insufflation means with the speculum and permitting internal pressurization of the speculum; and

the contamination prevention means adapted prevent the insufflation medium from passing from an internal side to an external side of the inlet port while the insufflation medium is in use.

21. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 1, 2, 10, 11, or 12, further comprising obturation means for facilitating insertion of the spectrum into the bowel cavity of the patent.

22. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:

an obturator having an elongated stem adapted to pass axially though the speculum; and

a head adapted to protrude at least partially beyond the insertion end, the head connected to the elongated stem.

23. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 22, wherein the obturator may axially withdraw through the observation end of the sigmoidoscope.

24. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 23, wherein the observation window is adapted to be closed and sealed after the obturator is withdrawn.

25. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:

a hollow, generally tubular obturation sleeve slidably disposed in axial telescopic engagement with the speculum;

a plurality of resiliently deformable petal formations connected to the insertion end and selectively movable between a domed closed configuration a withdrawn open configuration.

26. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 25, wherein:

the obturator is external to the speculum; and

the petal formations are generally curved inwardly toward one another.

27. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 26 wherein the petal formations are resiliently biased inwardly toward the closed configuration and are displaced progressively outwardly toward the open configuration by manual sliding of the obturation sleeve away from the insertion end.

28. The disposable speculum of claim 1, further comprising:

a connection to the reusable insufflation means; and

contamination prevention means for preventing contaminated insufflation medium from contacting the insufflation means.

29. A speculum according to claim 28, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a non-return valve.

30. A speculum according to claim 28 or claim 29, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a filter.

31. A speculum according to any one of claims 28 or 29,wherein the connection comprises an eyepiece.

32. A speculum according to any one of claims 28 or 29, wherein the insufflation means comprises an insufflation bulb.

33. A speculum according to claim 28, further comprising coupling means for optically coupling a light source at an outer circumferential edge of the speculum.

34. A speculum according to claim 33, further comprising:

an observation means; and

a releasable coupling operably connecting the observation means to the light source adapted for releasable coupling to reusable observation means.

35. A speculum according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light conducting system.

36. A speculum according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light imaging system.

37. A speculum according to claim 35 or 36, wherein the observation means is connected to the speculum via an external connection head.

38. A speculum according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, further comprising a hollow tubular body having good light transmission properties.

39. A speculum according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, wherein the speculum is made of a plastic.

40. The disposable speculum of claim 1, further comprising integral manually operable insufflation means adapted for disposal with the speculum to prevent cross contamination between patients due to contamination of the insufflation medium.